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Springfield, Illinois —Legislation sponsored by State Senator Tony Munoz (D-Chicago) was signed into law by Governor Quinn increasing the criminal charges for the offense of unlawful use of a weapon by a convicted felon.

"The Chicago area has experienced a dramatic increase in its number of shooting deaths over the past several months," said Senator Munoz. "This law will provide increased penalties for those who choose to unlawfully use weapons on our streets and in our neighborhoods."

Under this new law, a defendant convicted of unlawful use or possession of weapon who has previously been convicted of a felon is subject to a mandatory prison term of two to ten years in prison.

Previously, the unlawful use or possession of weapon by a convicted felon was a Class 3 felony, carrying a sentence of only two to five years in prison and a \$25,000 fine. In addition, current the sentence of incarceration is discretionary, and does not require the court to sentence a felon convicted of this offense to prison.

"This legislation is a recommendation from the Interstate Gun Trafficking Task Force, of which I am a member and it is supported by family's who have lost loved ones to gun crimes," stated Senator Munoz. "Many people who are charged with or convicted of gun crimes end up back on the streets with little or no penalty. The murder of Chicago Police Officer Thomas Wortham in Chicago last summer was just one high-profile example, but there have been many, many others. This common sense legislation will ultimately help to save lives."